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9 June 2017

Mrs Karen Fagg  
Park Primary School  
Monmouth Road  
Doncaster  
South Yorkshire  
DN2 4JP

Dear Mrs Fagg

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Park Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 19 May 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in April 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in April 2016, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that teaching is consistently good, in order to accelerate all pupils' progress and improve outcomes, particularly in reading
- amend the safeguarding policy to reflect the thorough, up-to-date and effective work that is taking place in the school with regards to safeguarding
- make sure that there is consistent challenge for pupils to reach greater depth in their learning across subjects
- ensure that leaders' plans and evaluations of work to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are robust and defined, so that governors have a clearer understanding of the impact that this funding has on pupils' outcomes.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, middle leaders, the school business manager and the chair of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with the local authority standards and effectiveness partner, staff responsible for safeguarding and your junior leadership team. The school improvement plan was evaluated. We undertook a learning walk through the school in order to observe pupils' learning in class and sample some of their work in their books and in displays around school. I spent time reviewing documents, including the work of governors and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, the school staffing has undergone considerable change. You and the acting deputy headteacher have been appointed to your substantive posts. You have appointed a new team of six middle leaders. Beyond the changes in leadership within the school, a close partnership is now in place with a local primary school, through the Doncaster teaching school alliance, focused on leaders and staff working together to share good practice. A senior representative from the local authority, who has worked with the school in the past, has been working alongside school leaders and governors as the school effectiveness partner since January 2017.

## **Main findings**

Leaders, staff and the local authority are aware that there is still much to do to ensure that pupils' outcomes are good, but the determination and focus of new leaders mean that this is an improving school.

As the new headteacher, you have brought direction and ambition to the school. Staff morale is high and pupils are engaged, enjoying learning and rising to your high expectations.

The school met the government's definition of 'coasting' after further disappointing results for Year 6 in 2016, particularly in reading. These tests were taken two weeks after you took up your acting headship. You and your team have tackled this underperformance with vigour, with a clear view of improvements needed and of how staff can be supported in bringing about positive changes. The impact of this work is seen in the stronger work and progress of current pupils, as well as in the confidence and purposefulness of teachers.

The school's plans to tackle areas requiring improvement are thought out carefully and focus on the right priorities. The school's self-evaluation portrays an accurate and honest picture of the school. It celebrates the strengths and improvements made, but makes explicit the areas that still need further improvement to ensure good outcomes for pupils.

The appointment of new middle leaders has enabled you to distribute the large number of tasks to be tackled. The determination and dedication of these leaders in playing their part in supporting colleagues in improving outcomes for pupils is evident. They have a rapidly developing knowledge and understanding of their role: staff feel well supported and leaders can already see the impact of their work on pupils' learning.

Work to check the impact of the actions for improvement are rightly rigorous. Staff understand that checks in lessons and of pupils' work are fundamental in securing the improvement needed, and are on board with this process. Staff are well supported by specific and whole-school training with the local authority, the partner school and beyond. Weekly checks and evaluations give everyone confidence that their work is having a positive impact. Consequently, teaching and learning are improving.

New assessment systems you have devised have enabled you to carefully check the progress that pupils, and groups of pupils, are making. Teachers are fully involved in checking pupils' progress with middle leaders, and there is a good understanding of which pupils are doing well and which need more intensive support. The gap between lower-ability pupils and the national standard is starting to diminish. You agree that work to extend support and challenge for the most able pupils needs to be equally high profile.

Successful work to improve writing is visible in pupils' books and also in the high-quality displays around school, including impressive work across year groups on Shakespeare's plays. There is an intrinsic link between developing a love of real books and looking at the work of different authors to spur pupils' motivation for their own writing. New systems for increasing productivity and the quality of writing are working. Pupils enjoy writing and are eager to write sustained pieces. The link that teachers support pupils in making from their grammar, punctuation and spelling activities through to their extended writing is also having a positive impact: pupils apply their new skills effectively in their writing.

In mathematics, leaders' direction to ensure that all pupils are supported in extending their learning, reasoning and developing their ideas is starting to have a positive impact. Teachers use layered target systems to match work appropriately to pupils' needs. Sometimes pupils can select the relevant target, but the teacher also intervenes to direct them if appropriate. Pupils of all abilities are starting to be encouraged to reason and deepen their understanding, although you identify that it is early days and that this needs further development to ensure consistency across school.

Much work has been done to improve outdoor learning opportunities for the children in the early years. Children have access to several defined areas where they can explore and test their ideas. They are starting to make choices in their learning and staff are responsive to children's discussions and questions. For example, when children found a spider and were trying to count how many legs it had, discussion led to their using a magnifying glass to check. A focus on using accurate vocabulary, as well as high-quality questioning from adults, is moving

children on in their learning, whatever their starting points. The early years leader has a clear vision for the children in the setting. She has improved the assessment system. She has started to track more closely how the disadvantaged children are doing, and is becoming more involved in how the funding is directed for these pupils. She agrees that plans for disadvantaged children could be further refined by carefully mapping the ongoing provision for these children against regular checks on the impact of this support.

The governors recognise the positive shift in the direction of the school. They value the staff's commitment and the positive changes being brought about. However, they understand the rigour and pace needed to ensure higher attainment and stronger progress for pupils. They rightly seek external advice to ensure that the challenge and support they give to leaders are accurate. As one governor said, 'They need to be sure what good looks like.' Governors receive detailed assessment information, which includes information about how well groups of pupils are doing. However, governors agree that a clearer breakdown of the information about pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities would enable them to more rigorously test out the impact of specific funding for these pupils.

During the inspection, you and your leadership team provided examples to show that there is a good understanding of procedures for effective safeguarding. Your safeguarding officer and parent support adviser have a good understanding of pupils' and families' needs, and are on hand to frequently catch up with pupils who need their help. Practices and training are all up to date, although we agreed that the safeguarding policy needs to be quickly reviewed to incorporate the current effective practice going forward.

### **External support**

You and your staff want to provide the very best for your pupils, and there is a very receptive view to external support, guidance and professional development opportunities. The comprehensive and thorough support from Barnby Dun Primary Academy, within the teaching alliance, is giving staff the opportunity to glean new ideas and share good practice. For the leadership team, this partnership is providing strong support in checking that plans for improvement are right and that impact is measured accurately.

Since January 2017, there has been a more effective partnership with the local authority, with rigour of challenge from the school effectiveness partner but also appropriate support and guidance. You and other leaders say that you welcome this support. As a result of this range of support, leaders are confident in their evaluation of the school and about the next steps they need to take.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Doncaster. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kate Rowley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**